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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 001788

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: STATEMENT ON ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER STRIFE

Classified By: A/DCM Kathy Fitzpatrick; reason 1.4 (B)

¶1. (C) The MFA issued a statement July 12 condemning the Hizballah cross-border raid and kidnapping of two Israel soldiers and calling upon Israel to act with restraint. MFA contacts told us that the Spanish statement would likely have been more critical of Israel had it been released today, after reports emerged of Israel's military strikes in Lebanon. Media reports indicate that Deputy FM Bernardino Leon will call in Arab ambassadors on July 13 or 14 to review Spain's views on events in Lebanon and Israel.

//SPANISH STATEMENT//

¶2. The following is an unofficial translation of the Spanish statement:

BEGIN TEXT

CONFRONTATION ON THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER

Madrid, 12 July, 2006

The Government of Spain expresses its strong condemnation of the armed attack and kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbollah forces that took place this morning in the border area between Lebanon and Israel. This action and the subsequent Israeli reaction create new instability, adding to the deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The Spanish Government, deeply concerned by these grave events, calls for an end to armed attacks against Israel and for the immediate and unconditional release of the kidnapped soldiers. In the same vein, (Spain) asks that Israel act with moderation and proportionality to these events, taking into account the importance of avoiding a generalization of violence that would put at risk regional stability and would, once again, primarily victimize the civilian population.

The Spanish Government is in permanent contact with the Parties and with other international actors with the objective of helping reduce tensions and contributing to the resolution of the crisis.

END TEXT

//MFA FRUSTRATION WITH ISRAELI REACTION//

¶3. (C) MFA Middle East watchers told us July 13 that the Spanish statement would likely have adopted a harsher tone towards Israel had the MFA waited for the full reports of the Israeli reaction to emerge. They conveyed a sense of frustration with the direction of events and what they described as Israel's "overreaction" to the kidnapping of its soldiers.

AGUIRRE